A. 8.

Hugh Cecil Earl of Lonsdale.

360 Bits and Bearing Reins. By **Edward Fordham Flower.** Third Edition. London. 1875.

8vo. 31 pp. 3 plates—"Comfort," "Discomfort," and "Torture." M., $8\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $5\frac{3}{8}$ in.

Plate I.

COMFORT.

BITS

AND

BEARING REINS,

BY

EDWARD FORDHAM FLOWER.

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:
WILLIAM RIDGWAY, 169, PICCADILLY, W.
1875.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION.

As my name has lately been associated with efforts to abolish the barbarous custom of driving carriage horses with Gag bearing-reins, sharp Curbs, and atrocious Bits, to show that I do not speak without knowledge and experience, I will sketch a few facts in my past life, bearing on the subject of horses. I do not remember the time when I could not ride. At four years of age I used to accompany a servant to our post town, three miles from my father's residence, for letters, and before I was five went alone every morning on my pony for them.

My father was an excellent rider, and hunted with Lord Salisbury's hounds at that time. I used to go out frequently with him. I and my little pony (Moses) were well known to the then Dowager Lady Salisbury, whom I used to follow as well as I could, by scrambling up and down the banks, and along the Hertfordshire lanes. I well remember being sent, at ten years of age, alone, a distance of forty miles to carry a letter, and bring back the answer the next day, that being a quicker way of sending it across the country than by post.

That ride was done on a donkey, a fine Spanish ass, which my father imported with a large flock of Merino sheep. In my eleventh year I went, on that same donkey, from our residence near Hertford to Guildford in Surrey on a similar errand; indeed, at that time, riding and driving formed a large item in my scheme of education, much to my satisfaction.

Then the scene changed: but the ruling passion was still the same. We were in America, bound for what was then the "Far West." The road over the Alleghany mountains for long distances was a mere track, or worse. I was then just thirteen, and I drove a pair of horses in an American carriage all the way, three hundred miles, from Philadelphia to Pittsburg. My mother, who was lame, did not like to trust the driving to any one but me. Had I used bearing-reins, curbs, &c. we should soon have come to grief.

Then we floated down the Ohio (in arks) before there were any steamboats on its waters; and another long and difficult driving journey brought us to our destination. During the next few years I took many long journeys with my horse and dogs, sometimes lying out all night under a tree and lighting a fire to scare the wolves, when I would make a pillow of the saddle, and lie close to my horse's back for warmth. In that way we became friends, and I can never look upon horses but with feelings of sympathy, knowing how well they appreciate

it, and how they suffer when neglected or unkindly treated. But I must get on with my story, though it is tempting to linger over some of those wild journeys of my youth.

Another change, and I returned to England, but was never without a horse. When I could not afford to give high prices, there was one fault I could always put up with, and that was what is called "temper." If a horse had a character for being vicious, that was the horse for me. I knew that probably by judicious management and kindness I could make him tractable, so I frequently got a capital animal at a very low price, and I have done as much riding and driving about the country as any one, with no bearing-reins, and generally with a plain snaffle bridle.

A few years ago, I bought a fine horse with a bad character, he was a roarer, a jibber, a bolter, and the late coachman told me I should never be able to drive him; but I liked his looks, and the result confirmed my good opinion. The roaring soon ceased after the tight gag bearing-rein was taken away; an easy bit was put in his mouth instead of the severe one, which had caused him to be restive through sheer pain; he became perfectly tractable, and I have driven him for years both in double and single harness with great comfort and safety.

I have for many seasons been well known in various hunting fields in the Midland counties, but

in consequence of a severe illness I have lately been obliged to give up hunting; and last year I came to live in London, thinking that the Row and the Park would in future be field enough for me; and so it would, and a very enjoyable one, were it not disfigured and disgraced by the barbarous and senseless use of spurs, whips, curbs, gag bits, and bearing-reins. Fashion is strong—stronger, I fear, than humanity - but still I have hopes. Fashion no longer orders horses to be cropped, docked, and nicked; therefore these new forms of distortion and cruelty may give way.

If a few leaders of fashion would join with men and women of common sense and lovers of humanity, we should soon wipe out this blot upon our civilization. I am happy to have been allowed to raise my feeble voice in the cause : and I heartily thank all those (and they are many) who have come forward to help and encourage me. I shall persevere, and though I am old, I do not despair of living long enough to have it engraved on my tombstone,* "He was one of those men who caused the bearing-rein to be abolished."

E. F. FLOWER.

35, *Hyde Park Gardens.*

* See Sir Arthur Helps' "Some Talk about Animals and their Masters," p. 68.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT BEARING-REINS.

The evils of Bearing-reins, of which the sole use is to hold the horse's head at an unnatural and dangerous height, have been so frequently and so conclusively pointed out, that it might have been hoped they would have become as obsolete as cropping, docking, and nicking.

So far from this being the case, the evil has been continued in an aggravated form by the introduction of the "Gag bearing-rein."

The mouth of the horse is extremely sensitive. The most valuable qualification for a horseman is that he should possess what is termed "Hands." The rarity of this qualification arises from the fact that the hand of man is naturally far less sensitive than the mouth of the horse. Hence Ladies have generally better hands than gentlemen, and gentlemen better hands than grooms.

A horse in harness, without a bearing-rein, has the free command of his limbs, under the direction and control of his driver, communicated to him by the ordinary bit. If the driver has good hands the horse yields a prompt and ready obedience, and the most perfect sympathy exists between him and his master. A slip or a stumble is not likely to occur, and should it happen recovery is easy.

The first step in the wrong direction is the use of the old fashioned or simple bearing-rein (Pl. 2).

In this the bearing-rein is attached to the ring of the driving bit at B; it passes through a loop attached to the bridle at C, and is fastened to a hook on the pad at A. The pad is prevented from moving forward by the crupper. Thus the head and tail of the horse are tied together, more or less tightly, according as the bearing-rein and crupper are respectively buckled.

This bearing-rein acts as a single or fixed pulley (Pl. 2, fig. 1), in which A, the power, is equivalent to B, the weight. A is the groom's hand or the power, B the horse's mouth or the weight, and C the pulley.

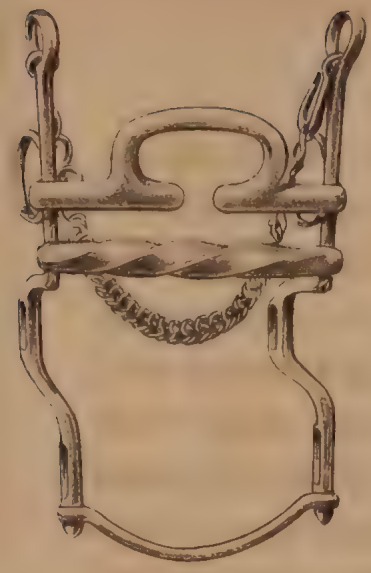
This bearing-rein may at any time be unhooked from the pad, and the horse thus released from its pressure; a great relief when kept standing for hours, and especially when going up hill.

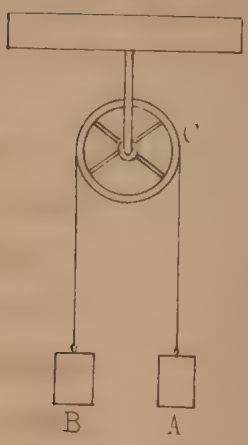
Latterly a far more complicated and powerful instrument has come into fashion.

This is the Bedouin, or Gag bearing-rein (Pl. 3), which is attached to the top of the bridle (at E). It is then passed through a swivel attached to the separate bearing-rein bit, which has nothing to do with the driving. Thence it passes through the drop ring (C), and is attached to the pad and crupper as in the former case.

The effect of this is to double the power by which it can be tightened, for by mechanics we learn that

Plate 2.





DISCOMFORT.

TORTURE.

1 lb. applied at A is equivalent to 2 lbs. at B, a fact which every one can prove for himself.

Thus it is evident what force is brought to bear on the horse's mouth, a sufficiently sensitive organ, even when unencumbered by another heavy bit, with cruel cutting power.

Severe as is the simple bearing-rein explained in Pl. 2, its evil is doubled by the Gag system, for its elevating power is as we have shown doubled, nor can the coachman relax this terrible and dangerous gag bit, for separate as it is from the driving apparatus, it would fall out of the horse's mouth, and to put it in again would take time and persuasion, or rather force.

The pain thus occasioned to the horse is intense. The action of every muscle is impeded. If a false step is taken, recovery is rendered difficult. Discomfort makes the poor animal restless. The impatient movements occasioned by his distress, are not unfrequently visited by a cut from the whip of an ignorant coachman; the horse is called unruly and ill-tempered, when he is only miserable. Some new instrument of torture is forced into his mouth in the shape of a Bit, devised for the very purpose of inflicting pain, until, with temper and mouth both ruined, he passes into the hands of a Bus driver or Cabman, when his bearing-rein is cast aside, and for the first time he is treated with common sense and humanity.

It is a severe penance to any man who loves a

horse to walk along the fashionable streets or the Park, and to witness the sufferings of horses from this absurd and cruel practice.

Little does the benevolent Dowager who sits absorbed in the pages of the last tract of the "Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals," know of the sufferings of the two noble animals by whom she is leisurely drawn along the "Lady's mile."

She probably fancies that the high prancing step, and the toss of the head which scatters flakes of foam at every step are expressions of pride and satisfaction at their task, when in fact they are occasioned by pain, and a vain attempt to obtain a momentary relief from their suffering.

Although the evil of bearing-reins has always been clear to me, as will be seen by any one who reads my introduction, the first time I expressed my opinion in public was at the annual meeting of the "Royal Society for the Suppression of Cruelty to Animals" in 1868, following an eloquent and powerful speech by the late Earl of Romney. In the appendix I shall reproduce part of that speech, and my own also, as they have probably never been read by any one from that time to this. But no steps were taken to mitigate the evil, indeed it has been increasing fearfully ever since, while the eyes of the carriage driving public seem closed, and their hearts callous.

This last year I made another appeal through the

newspapers. Several Editors were kind enough to insert a few short letters of mine, which have been extensively read both in town and country, and I am happy to say with much good effect. Expressions of sympathy and encouragement have come to me from all quarters. Many noblemen, gentlemen, and ladies have written to thank and encourage me to persevere,—some to say they never have used bearing-reins, some that they shall in future abolish them, or that they have done so, and that their horses go much better without them.

Lord Portsmouth, for instance, a high authority, says:—"I never allow a bearing-rein to be used in my establishment, nor did my father before me; I am sure they are both useless and cruel."

Thirty or forty years ago, when country people were obliged to drive long distances, the simple bearing-rein was sometimes used, but then it was always unfastened in going up hill, to ease the horse and allow him to exert his strength; but now I seldom or never see a bearing-rein unfastened, even when standing for hours.

At that time Four-in-hands were much more common than they are now, as also were fast coaches, and then there were plenty of good coachmen. The "Tantivy" was a famous coach, going from London to Birmingham, *viâ* Oxford, 120 miles each day. There were four drivers, three of whom used the simple bearing-rein, but Cracknell, who

drove from London to Oxford, never did. I well remember sitting on the box with him when one of his fellow coachmen was ill, and for months he drove the whole distance in one day, and back the next, ten miles an hour, including stoppages, and was always exact to time. His horses had no bearing-reins or cruppers, and soon after that all the other coachmen left them off. But now some gentlemen who drive "four in hand" say they cannot hold their horses without gag reins, curbs, and sharp bits, and even then when they pull up a groom or two has to stand at their heads to keep them quiet, they being so irritated by all those barbarous contrivances.

These are some of the facts and arguments with which I plead the cause of this long suffering and much abused friend and slave of man. I have written warmly, but I believe truthfully; and now I only ask my readers to look with observing and unprejudiced eyes upon their own and other horses, and they will see that I have not exaggerated the case. Many, I am sure, will then agree with me, and act as common sense and humanity dictate, abandoning at once and for ever the use of the Gag Bearing-rein.

APPENDIX.

Since my first edition was printed, we have had to lament the loss of one who, in his interesting works on various subjects, has said much to deprecate this form of cruelty; he was one of the first to give me sympathy and encouragement, and I have a melancholy pleasure in producing a short letter from him, as his valuable opinion must give weight to mine.

Dear Mr. Flower,

Your letter in the "Daily News" of to-day looks well, and I trust will have a good effect. You have evidently been careful not in the least to exaggerate the suffering and the mischief caused by this foolish and detestable bearing-rein.

Yours very truly,
ARTHUR HELPS.

CRUELTY TO HORSES.

To the Editor of the "Times."

Sir,—Much has been written and said about cruelty to animals, and a very excellent Society is doing much to suppress it, in many ways very successfully; but there is one most cruel and barbarous practice going on all around us, of which they take no notice, possibly because the perpetrators are in the higher classes of society, which really makes it much worse, for they ought to know better. This stupid and cruel practice is the use of the gag or Bedouin bearing-rein to carriage horses; which not only puts the animal to present torture, but by forcing the head into an unnatural position, brings on many painful and fatal disorders. Let any one watch the horses in the Park, or standing as they do for hours at the theatres,

shops, &c., with foaming mouths, and tongues swollen and hanging out, trying to get a little ease to their poor heads and necks, by tossing them up, putting them sideways, or in any possible position, vainly appealing to their unheeding or ignorant masters, or coachmen to slacken, if only for a few minutes, the torturing rein, and then say, if we can call ourselves a humane people? Probably, the master or mistress only hires the horses and cares nothing about them, so long as they get through their work, perhaps thinking that a horse with his head stuck up in the air looks finer than in a natural and graceful position. Many other evils of this bearing-rein might be pointed out, especially when coupled, as they frequently are, with one or other of the atrocious bits now in use; but what I have now said may be enough to draw the attention of some who, while they consider themselves lovers of humanity, and are anxious to suppress cruelty when they see it in isolated cases, and among the lower orders, yet are all the time inflicting it in this aggravated and senseless manner.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

E. F. FLOWER.

THE GAG BEARING-REIN.

To the Editor of the "Daily News," August 20.

Sir,—You were so good as to insert a letter from me on this subject in your impression of the 10th inst., and I have been kindly responded to by many communications, public and private. I have also to thank you heartily in the name of humanity for your excellent article on the 11th. Surely, enough, one might think, had been said on this subject, but such evils are slow of cure. I have always paid much attention to horses and to their treatment, and since I have lived in London have been particularly struck with the general unkindness of coachmen

to their dumb slaves, and the ignorance and indifference of masters and mistresses. I seldom ride in the Park, or in the fashionable streets during the season, without having my feelings outraged by some flagrant sight of suffering and cruelty. When I have occasionally called the attention of a coachman to it or asked him to slacken a rein, he generally tells me to mind my own business, and if I spoke to the master he would probably say, "Oh, the horses are not mine, I only hire them." Whereas if I speak to a carter and explain to him how much more comfortably the animal would draw his load if left free he usually thanks me, and often does what I suggest.

Indeed, I find as a rule much less sympathy between drivers and their horses in the upper than in the lower classes, and yet it is to prosecute the latter that the energies and funds of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals are applied. Beyond printing arguments, and distributing them to those who ask for them, the Society say they can do nothing; but surely this infliction of the gag bearing-rein ought to come within the Act for "torturing animals," under which there are hundreds of convictions every year. I have not heard of one gentleman or gentleman's coachman being brought to justice, though his horses may stand gagged and tortured for half the night. No wonder there are so many complaints of the want of good horses, of the high price, and of their wearing out so soon. By inserting this you will oblige yours obediently,

E. F. FLOWER.

GAG BEARING-REINS.

To the Editor of the "Daily News."

Sir,—Allow me space for a few lines on one point which I omitted in my former letter on this subject.

There is frequently a cross bar at the bottom of the bit, and when the bearing-rein is taken away, it is possible that the horse, by rubbing the pole or shaft, may catch the bit on it, and cause an accident, therefore the cross bar ought to be cut away (it is of no use), or an easy bit substituted, or a plain snaffle, which for single harness is best of all, if a coachman has good hands and knows how to drive by judicious management, and not, as is too often the case entirely by main force, though with some horses it may be necessary to have a curb, especially if their mouths have been spoiled by bad driving.

I am happy to know that in consequence of the present discussion some of your readers have abolished the barbarous invention of the gag bearing-rein, and they assure me their horses go much better.—Yours obediently,

E. F. FLOWER.

AN EARNEST APPEAL

TO LADIES WHO OWN OR DRIVE CARRIAGE HORSES.

CRUELTY OF THE GAG BIT AND BEARING-REIN.

—You all know the oft-quoted lines of Gray:

"* * * * where ignorance is bliss
'Tis folly to be wise."

Upon that principle, I suppose, people shut their eyes to much of the misery going on around them; but if by knowledge they can remedy the evil, it is surely folly to be ignorant. Ladies little know the amount of pain that is being inflicted upon their carriage horses by the use of the gag bearing-rein, and the atrociously sharp bits and curbs which their coachmen are so fond of using. When next you step out of your carriage or go into the Park or fashionable streets, just look at the animals' mouths,

which are naturally as sensitive as any part of your own frame—how they are frequently foaming, quivering, lacerated by all that torturing iron, while their heads are gagged up by a strong leather rein, through a double pulley to the saddle, which is made tight to the tail by the crupper; so that the mouth and tail of the poor animal are tied together; and in that way they have to draw their load or stand for hours at theatres, shops, &c., unrelieved, while probably the coachman amuses himself by "touching them up" with his whip if they venture by restlessness to show the agony they are enduring.

The coachman's excuse for extra sharp bits, curbs, and reins, generally is that the horses pull. Of course they pull when they are hurt, to get away from the pain. Few horses pull whose mouths have not been spoiled by rough hands and hard bits. Ladies are accused of liking to see horses with their heads stuck up in the air (like wooden rocking horses) and their legs prancing. Surely it is because they do not know how much more graceful a well-fed, not overworked horse is in its free, natural attitudes. Do, ladies, look at your horses' mouths; do not mind what your coachmen say about the necessity of such barbarous atrocities of gag bearing-reins and sharp bits, and the irritating use of the whip; make yourself acquainted with the animals to whom you owe so much of your comfort and pleasure—they will well repay you for any consideration and kindness. Let them be driven with as little pain to themselves as possible, and there will be far less danger of their running away, kicking, stumbling, or falling down, as nearly all accidents arise from some irritating cause to the horse, either in the harness or the driver.

C. F.

"Another source of great suffering to animals, and with which I am less practically acquainted, is the use of the bit. What is suitable for one horse is not suitable for another; and in changing a bit, it is a matter of the greatest consequence that it is suitable, otherwise you will be putting the animal to unnecessary pain. And then there is the bearing-rein: the use of this shows a want of information and knowledge of the horse, and a great lack of knowing what are the capabilities of the animal."—*Extract from Speech delivered at Torquay by Baroness Burdett Coutts* (1874).

From the "Daily News," August 12th, 1874.

In our impression on Monday a Correspondent made an appeal to the owners or hirers of carriage horses to abandon the use of the gag bearing-rein, which inflicts a very considerable amount of pain and discomfort on these much-enduring animals. We fancy that the ladies and gentlemen in question have no idea whatever of the torture which is thus inflicted on horses, or they would immediately order their grooms to go back to the old bearing-rein, or abandon both altogether. The old one was bad enough, to be sure. Its only object was to keep the head of the horse high in the air, and to make it paw and rear at starting, for the admiration of nurserymaids; but it did not at all add to the safety of the inmates of the carriage in going down hill, when the horse could not possibly recover from a stumble, while the unfortunate animal, in going up hill, lost that chance of "putting its head down to its work" which is natural to beasts of draught. The gag bearing-rein, however, is infinitely worse in its operation, chaining up the animal's head in an unnatural and cramped position; while, as our Correspondent says, it is generally used in combination with a bit so inhumanly

constructed as to provoke the temper of the quietest horse going. It is no wonder that perfectly broken horses hired for the season from some job-master are returned to him at the end of three months in a fair way to become habitual jibbers, through the fashion in which they have been treated by some reckless groom who wants to cut a dash at starting. As for gentlemen who own the horses they drive, the comfort of these animals should be to them a matter of constant attention, and not left to depend on the caprice or ignorance of a servant. We are sorry to hear, moreover, that this evil English fashion is being copied abroad, where bearing-reins of every description were at one time wholly unknown. Of course, whatever England does in the way of horses and carriages must seem good in the eyes of the lucky speculator on the Bourse, whose only aim is to have a gorgeous turn-out in the Bois. But English gentlemen are said to know their horses, and have a tender care for them; and we shall be glad to find the instrument of torture we have mentioned put aside as unworthy of the humaner tendencies of our time.

From the "Evening Standard."

In another column our readers will see that Mr. Flower renews his protest against bearing-reins, and lays before the public his own experience. What he says on the subject is well worthy of attention, and cannot be dismissed as the utterance of some unpractical humanitarian. For a generation past the writer has been pretty well known as a cross-country rider in Warwickshire, and he is, therefore, presumably well qualified to speak about horses. And the bearing-rein question is one which ought, just now, certainly to engage the attention of those who care to do real work in the prevention of cruelty to animals.

It is whispered that when the conference of humanitarians was recently in session at the Albert Hall, there were some fine specimens of horse torture to be seen in the waiting carriages outside. Besides, the old-fashioned bearing-rein, which was sometimes not worse than merely uncomfortable, is being superseded by a bearing-rein which hauls at the bit by a pulley, giving a pull of two pounds at the mouth for every one on the rein. This, when tightly fitted, has the unsightly effect of sometimes causing the tongue of the horse to hang out of its mouth. So it is supplemented by a curb bit fitted with a hoop, in which the tongue is held straight, the bar of the curb passing under the tongue, and acting cruelly on the most tender and sensitive part of the mouth. Not only are such fashions as these cruel, but their adoption spoils good horses, and indicates that in all probability the coachman knows but little of his business.

GAG BEARING-REINS.

From the Spectator.

A correspondent of more than one of the morning papers, Mr. E. F. Flower, has been descanting with great force and good sense on the absurdity of bearing-reins, a part of the harness which has no effect on the horse except an irritating one, which, when a "gag bearing-rein" is used, as it is now more and more frequently in London, is a simple instrument of torture. The truth is that the popularity of bearing-reins is due almost entirely to grooms and coachmen, who have an ignorant liking for that uneasy motion of the horse's head which it induces, and which, they think, imposes on the world as "fire." Now, a very large number of the class of self-made rich men, having no knowledge of their own horses, are completely in the hands of their coachmen and grooms, and yield an implicit faith,

therefore, to the efficiency of the bearing-rein. If a few long-haired gentlemen or ladies would try how far it would add to the freedom of their own movements to have their back hair fastened tight down to the small of their waists, they would form a better notion of the delights and utilities of the bearing-rein.

"In England," says an American paper, "the greatest cruelty to horses comes from the use of the bearing-rein, which is used for pomposity. The horses, with heads stuck in the air, and mouths fretted and foaming, look so much more dashing and spirited! The other day, while the Congress concerning cruelty was in session, there was a long line of coaches in front of the building, and in many horses were suffering most intensely, while the wealthy owners were weeping over the woes of the animals of the poor."

To the Editor of the Daily News.

Sept. 12.

Sir,—I have just received the following letter, and as it bears forcibly upon the subject of my former letters to you, I shall be obliged by your giving it a place in your valuable paper.—Yours obediently,

E. F. FLOWER.

35, *Hyde Park gardens, Sept.* 5.

Derby, Sept. 4.

My dear Sir,—I have read with deep interest your letter of the 10th of last month relative to the use of bearing-reins, as they are now frequently applied to single and double harness. Everyone who has noticed, as you have done, the torture to which some horses are subjected by having their heads held in such an unnatural

position for a length of time, must feel with you the desirability of abating this evil as much as possible. You have only alluded to horses driven in London, but thousands of poor animals are sadly irritated and injured throughout the country by the improper use of the bearing-rein. As soon as I had read your admirable letter on this subject, two circumstances occurred to my mind which I doubt not will interest you. About 40 years ago I was driving with my father in a gig when, on descending a slight hill, the horse, a very valuable one, stumbled.

My father, having great strength in his arms, and being an unusually good whip, retained his seat, and although the poor animal broke his knees badly, he recovered himself before we alighted. We noticed the repeated but fruitless efforts the poor horse made to save himself from falling, and in doing this his weight upon the bearing-rein actually drew the hook (which was the old-fashion D-shaped one) straight out, which liberated the rein, and allowed the horse to regain his feet. We noticed the ill effect of the bearing-rein, and discarded its use for the future; and it is my firm belief, from personal observation and matured experience, that horses do their work with infinitely less fatigue to themselves and less danger in falling, in case they stumble, if they have the free use of their heads. About the same period my father purchased a nearly thoroughbred mare for a fraction of her value in consequence of the gentleman to whom she belonged being unable to drive her. She had a tender mouth, and the moment the coachman put the bedouin rein on the hook of the pad she reared and plunged so violently as to be really dangerous; but after being driven by us a few times without a bearing-rein,

she became the most docile creature ever driven in single or double harness.

There are undoubtedly some few horses whose heads cannot be sufficiently held up to be driven with comfort without the bearing-rein, but these need not be so tight as to cause the horse pain, or prevent his putting his head in a natural position.

In the great majority of cases it would prove greatly to the interest of all owners of horses to discard the use of the bearing or bedouin reins.—Yours very truly,

HERBERT M. HOLMES.

E. F. Flower, Esq.

P.S. When I am again in town, I shall be much pleased to spend an hour with you, and hear the progress you are making in your philanthropic efforts in behalf of the London horses. I am glad to say there is little to complain of in this part of the country; several gentlemen have abandoned the use of bearing-reins since reading your letters in our local papers. One, who drives into town most days eight miles of hilly road, assures me he does it now in a quarter of an hour less time, and with less distress to the horses.

To the Editor of the Times.

Aug. 13, 1874

Sir,—From horses you certainly earn to-day an unanimous vote of thanks for your insertion of Mr. Flower's appeal "against" bearing-reins. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has constantly advocated the same humane course through its journal, the *Animal World*. Your co-operation was, however, the

very power that was wanted to set the mattter before the public in the proper light. The only solid argument in favour of bearing-reins is that a horse is thereby held better together for show purposes. Let it, then, be conceded that bearing-reins are admissible with a dress carriage on state occasions; also, too, if horses are heavy in hand, the streets crowded, and the coachman an indifferent whip. But for horses to have their heads kept constantly in one most unnatural position during long country drives, up hills and over bad roads, during "hours" of waiting to take up at night, when there are even none to admire save a snoring Jehu, is alike cruel and unworthy of a nation prominent in all things, but most prominent in the matter of horses. It is not only to our own horses that we do a grievous injury, but also to those of our numerous foreign imitators in all that concerns equine treatment. The night waiting beared up to the sky is the most important of all; for master and servant, if they do not sleep at one time sleep at another. With horses it is different. They can, and do, sleep standing, if allowed, but how is it possible for them to do so in their forced attitude? At 3 a.m. possibly, they reach their stable. The coachman is tired; so in nine cases out of ten he just takes off the harness, puts on the head-stall, and goes to bed. In the early morning, while the coachman yet sleeps, the groom comes, rouses the horses, does out the stable, and to save himself the trouble of re-grooming the animals, puts on the rack chain, even in the stable confining their heads. Thus do horses fall sick and break down, by being deprived of their natural rest, and tortured for show. Let me beseech masters to apply themselves to the subject. Let them only "try" the experiment of giving up bearing-reins. They will

certainly never take to them again if they appreciate the increased usefulness of their horses. Let them make the essay now in the country, and in the name of humanity I urge them next year in London to order their coachmen "never to put on bearing-reins at night," and if, perchance, they be necessary, as is possible in a few cases, that they be invariably loosened when waiting about after "setting down." There are perhaps, Sir, but few arts of civilization which Russia can bring to England. This one, though, there assuredly is, of the treatment of horses. The country of the Duchess of Edinburgh boasts some of the finest cattle in the world; incomparably powerful, docile, fast, and high-actioned horses, unabused by bearing-reins, high ports, heavy lever bits, curb chains, blinkers, ill-fitting, hard, heavy collars, hideous cumbrous pads, and unsightly cruppers. With plain snaffle-bits, the Russian coachman drives his three stallions at full gallop through crowded streets. The vehicle is lighter than anything we see in England, the collar of the smallest and most comfortable description, and, save the traces, a few thin straps represent the rest of the harness. Surely there is something herein for us to learn, and if there be any one willing to profit by it, he can see excellent specimens of Russian harness in the International Exhibition before it closes.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

C. E. H. VINCENT, Corresponding Member of the Russian Society (Moscow Branch) for the Protection of Animals; and Delegate for the same at the recent International Congress.

Naval and Military Club, W., Aug. 13, 1874.

Part of a Speech by the late Earl of Romney at the Annual Meeting of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in 1868.

"I will now speak of the upper classes. I regret to say that a practice is now being revived which was in vogue some thirty or forty years ago, but had been discontinued, and that is putting bearing-reins upon horses. I have no doubt that half the persons who adopt this practice are quite unconscious of the cruelty of it. I well recollect that when Sir Francis Head came over from North America, he drew attention to the extreme folly, without going further than that, when you want an animal to work, of putting something upon him which tends to restrain him from doing that work. For some time the foolish fashion went out, but I regret to say that it seems now to be reviving. It must be a source of grief to see the number of animals in carriages to which this bearing-rein is applied. The first thing is, whatever may be the form of the neck of the horse, to bring him so to speak into the same line, and the bearing-rein is introduced in order to bring his head into the required position. He is then attached to a carriage, and what is the next step? Perhaps the carriage is ordered to the door a couple of hours before it suits the convenience of the riders to enter it, and they let the horse stand there exposed to the heat of the sun and the biting of the flies; and there is the wretched animal with his head stuck up in the air, unable to drive away a fly; and among those persons who allow that, let me earnestly ask are there any ladies or gentlemen who come here and satisfy their conscience by subscribing a guinea a year to this Society, in order that some wretched costermonger, who has to maintain himself and family by working a donkey, may

be brought before a magistrate, committed and punished because his animal has got a sore? Those persons by their want of sympathy, teach the custom until it comes down to, and is adopted by, the costermonger. If I had the power, I should like to put these people out in the sun half undressed and let the flies bite them, because they would very soon be able to understand what torture they were inflicting upon those poor unfortunate animals; for while the wealthy classes can have no excuse for their cruelty, often the poor costermonger pleads poverty and the wants of his family as an excuse. The question is, can anything be done by this Society to obviate the evils to which I have referred? Is there any mode which can be suggested to these persons in order to shew the mischief which they are doing? I was talking to a job-master and veterinary surgeon this morning upon the subject, and he assured me that much mischief was done, and that the effect of the bearing-rein upon the construction of some portion of the throat of the horse was to make them roarers, so that we are not only foolish to use such an appliance, but we are wicked as well. The Secretary informs me that there is a book written upon the subject. I think it would be worth while if we were to send it to persons of influence, in order that they may have the subject brought to their notice."

Mr. Flower:—"I am happy that the noble Lord who has preceded me has touched upon the subject upon which I was anxious to speak, when I was asked to second this resolution. I think that attention must be called to the different departments, if I may so express myself, of the cruelty question to animals; and the particular de-

partment to which my attention has been called is that which the noble Lord on my left has so graphically and ably exposed, and to which the higher classes of society have not had their attention sufficiently called, namely, the bearing-rein. Having had, both in America and in England, more than fifty years' experience of the horse, I am prepared to affirm (and I feel assured that you will not omit to attend to the subject) that there is not a more unnecessary or gratuitous cruelty than the bearing-rein as it is now put on the horse by the higher class of society. Among the lower class of society, with whom I have often had to deal, I have got the answer, 'Look at that horse and compare him with mine.' I will tell you the difference. The bearing-rein which Sir Francis Head abolished by good writing was comparatively a humane bearing-rein to many bearing-reins which we see in London at the present time. I must describe to you what this bearing-rein practically is. In the first place I must tell you that the old fashioned bearing-rein merely took a single rein from each side of the bit, and was fastened to the collar or the saddle. The new fashioned bearing-rein, or Bedouin or gag bearing-rein, is fastened first to the head of the bridle against the horse's ears, and then a small round piece of leather comes down and passes through a ring in the horse's bit. It is then passed over the collar to the saddle, and he is reined in by the groom. What is the effect of that? Instead of the groom, when he reins up the horse, exerting the power of a pound weight, this acts as a pulley, and he exerts the power of two pounds. Probably people do not sufficiently consider this when they have these bearing-reins. I will ask you philanthropic gentlemen and tender-hearted ladies only to walk down St. James's Street on a Drawing Room day, and see

the agony which is caused to exist there. Ladies in their carriages, going to the Drawing Room, and gentlemen going to the Drawing Room, do not attend to these matters; the coachman on the box, to save a little trouble in the management of his horses, folding his arms; the footman not getting off, as he should do, to relieve the head when the horse is standing still—all are accessories to what I denounce as a great and unnecessary cruelty which is practised at the present day. I fully bear out what has been said before me, as I feel so strongly on the subject, having known great injury to arise to horses who have been so treated. Speaking to a dealer some years ago upon the subject, I asked him how it was he was gradually tightening up horses' heads from day to day before he sold them. He said that many people would not buy them unless he did so—that London people always wanted their horses to carry their heads high and to step high; and he said, 'another thing is, it soon wears them out, and they come for another pair of horses.' If a horse is naturally a high-stepping one, that is one thing, but to get a horse out of his natural gait I hold to be wanton cruelty. Some years ago all the coach horses had bearing-reins, until Sir Francis Head wrote them down. I very well remember observing to a coachman on one occasion that he had not the bearing-rein. He said that he had been reading the writings of Sir Francis Head, and (said he) 'How do you imagine that a horse can be the better for having his head and his tail tied together,' for from the crupper to the mouth there is a tightness which is very bad for the horse. There is one thing which I wish you would observe, and get your friends to observe also, because if you were to do that we should get rid of the tightness of these bearing-reins. Many of you have no doubt noticed cab horses

and omnibus horses at work without any bearing-reins at all. There are many horses which have been worked with a bearing-rein, but would not have strength to do their work if the bearing-rein were applied to them now. They work without the bearing-rein, and they do not tumble down. You will see in St. James's Street, when there is a Drawing Room, horses stand for two or three hours together. What is the expression of their countenance? They throw their heads first on one side and then on the other. They are trussed up like a fowl going to be roasted. They are put in that position which produces immense pain, which is wanton cruelty.

I ask you, ladies and gentlemen, to get your friends to consider this point, for I have heard from the very members of this Society, "Oh, no, it is nothing at all—it is merely a matter of habit;" but I assure you that until this cruel bearing-rein is done away with, there is little to be done with the ordinary habits of the lower classes of society. I have used bearing-reins myself with some particular horses, but I have never used the gag bearing-rein. It is this particular instrument which, after Sir Francis Head had done away with the old bearing-rein, some saddler invented, to sell. I ask you to distinguish between the two things. A slack bearing-rein which is put on many of the working horses, though I do not think them good things, is a comparatively innocuous contrivance, while the bearing-rein strapped up with the tightness with which you see it, is one of the most cruel things which could exist; and I do not think you could do better, when the London season begins, than to have some paper drawn up and sent to every person who keeps a carriage and horses in London. It has been said, 'the Society must not interfere with private rights.' Why, you are not interfering with private rights, but you are

interfering with private wrongs. In this same way the Society is interfering all day long with private rights, as these abuses are called. But attention being drawn to this subject, the constant watching it and speaking about it, that will get this abuse done away with. I can assure you, ladies and gentlemen, that living in a country neighbourhood as I do, I come to London sometimes with a great deal of pleasure; but when I see these cruelties, and see the horses pulled up with that gag rein, the pain is such that I have felt utterly disgusted with it, and have felt inclined to leave London at once. The noble Lord who preceded me so ably described this evil that perhaps it was unnecessary for me to have made the observations I have, but I wish to bear my testimony to that of this Society "against the cruelty and pernicious effect of the Bearing-Rein."

THE END.

DARVILL'S ENGLISH RACE-HORSE.

In 2 vols., with Plates, price 30*s*, New Edition.

A TREATISE ON THE CARE, TREATMENT, AND TRAINING OF THE ENGLISH RACE-HORSE.

With Important Details applicable to bettering the condition of Horses in general. By R. DARVILL, V.S. to the Seventh Hussars.

"Never before was such a book written in any language, so replete with those minute but indispensable particulars of practice, and by a writer who has personally performed his part throughout the whole of the practice. This is the true book of reference for every stud and training groom, and every jockey."—*Vide Lawrence on the Horse*, p. 297.

THE FARMERS' MEDICAL DICTIONARY FOR THE DISEASES OF ANIMALS.

By Cuthbert W. Johnson, Esq., F.R.S.

Price 6*s*.

"This is a very useful work. It contains a great variety of recipes for the cure of the diseases of domestic animals, which have long been successfully employed in an extensive practice in the south of England."—*Gardeners' Chronicle.*

"A capital work."—*Mark Lane Express.*

WILLIAM RIDGWAY, PICCADILLY, LONDON, W.